DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 057 685 FL 002 794

AUTHOR Augerot, James E.
TITLE A Syllabus for a Proposed Course "Introduction to Language."
INSTITUTION Washington Univ., Seattle. Washington Foreign Language Program.
SPONS AGENCY Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Colleges; *Course Descriptions; Course Objectives; Curriculum Guides; Experimental Curriculum; Language Instruction; Language Proficiency; Language Skills; *Language Universals; Learning Theories; Linguistics; Linguistic Theory; *Modern Languages; *Second Language Learning; Second Languages

ABSTRACT

This syllabus describes and outlines the first half of an experimental, two-year course leading to the study of a modern foreign language at the University of Washington. In effect, the two-year course, which introduces the student to the nature of language, tests the belief that it is easier to learn a second foreign language, due to linguistic sophistication acquired in learning the first, than it is to learn the first. The syllabus outlines the course work required in the introductory course for the autumn and winter quarter-semesters. The basic texts selected for this course include: "A Linguistic Reader" by Wilson, "A Linguistic Guide to Language Learning" by Moulton, and "Language" by Sapir. The work to be completed in the spring quarter of the second year is also outlined. (RL)

ED057685

A SYLLABUS FOR A PROPOSED COURSE "INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGE"

By

James E. Augerot

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Washington Foreign Language Program
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington
1971

FL002794

This course is intended to be the first half of an experimental two-year program which will include especially designed courses in modern foreign languages in the second year. These latter will be organized to take advantage of sophistication gained in the first year. They will be accelerated by leaving most of the oral drill to be done in the language laboratory, assuming that the prior phonetic training and the general linguistic background which the students bring to the language course will compensate. The later portions of the language courses will include a great deal more reading and systematic presentation of grammar than do most of the present second-year courses in the regular language program. These courses will be planned by language teachers from the respective departments toward the conclusion of the first year of the program. It is expected that with some modifications, available materials will be used. One important modification will no doubt be in the area of preparation on tape of extensive, carefully planned, oral exercises to be used in the laboratory to supplement classroom activity. It is hoped that there will be close collaboration among the language teachers and the staff of the first-year course.

We feel that this program will test the hypothesis that the reason a "second" foreign language is always easier than the "first" is due to an implicit linguistic sophistication that one gains in studying a foreign language. The first year program will not only make this knowledge explicit but will also generate interest in learning language

for its own sake. From this, a desirable side-product is anticipated: We are all aware that for various reasons the average language teacher is normally only secondarily interested in teaching the language, and that because of this, much of our current high school and college teaching suffers seriously; we hope that by indicating the complexity and fascination of the study of language to the student as he begins his work, we may stimulate him to consider language teaching in itself as a career.

It is not assumed that this program will produce students with the same motor skills in a language that the present two-year program of intense drilling and pattern practice produces. We do anticipate, however, that the participants in this program will have a greater understanding of how language works and at the same time an equal or better ability in reading and grammatical analysis. This ability will serve both to enable the student to use the language with a solid basis for perfection of the other skills.

It should be noted that this particular program presupposes a desire to prepare students for more extensive reading knowledge of a modern foreign language while sacrificing a certain amount of oral fluency. This is by no means inherent in the structure of the first-year course. It would also be possible to use the linguistic sophistication gained the first year as a basis for an oral course. As a matter of fact, it might very well go hand in hand with an entirely oral "programmed" course in language since the student will no doubt be able to discover many relationships in the language on his own.

In the experimental stages we wish to draw upon a variety of entering freshmen: first, some who have had extensive language

background in high school and would perhaps like to take a different language at the University; second, some from those who plan a major in a technical field and who are more likely to need a reading knowledge of a modern foreign language; and, third, some of those who are dissatisfied with the present language requirement and would consent to being "guinea pigs" in this special program. All students, with the exception of those who bypass the requirement via the placement test, will be obligated to finish the two-year sequence. It is assumed that all the students with prior language experience will take the placement examination upon entrance to the University. This will provide us with some additional information for evaluation of the program at its termination. Those who do qualify for exemption from the language requirement might be encouraged on the basis of their performance in the first year of the course to take up one of the "critical" languages usually offered only to upper-division and graduate students.

The program, at least in its experimental stage, is not to be construed as an <u>elective</u> alternative to the language requirement at the University, although it will satisfy the requirement for those participating. It will be implemented with a limited enrollment (75-100) on a "permission only" basis in its first year, 1968-69. In 1969-70, the special language courses would be limited to perhaps three modern languages with approximately twenty students in each. At the end of these courses we propose to use available records of "regular" two-year language students for a comparison which we hope will be instructive.

It must be kept in mind that we consider the first-year course

not only a preparation for the special language courses but as a genuine "content" course, invaluable in itself as part of the general education every university should offer to its students.

Course title: Introduction to Language, 101, 102, 103 (5, 5, 5). The course will consist of three lectures a week for the entire class and two laboratory sessions for smaller groups (approximately 20 in each) which will be led by graduate assistants in Linguistics. The laboratory sessions will provide the students with the opportunity to work with language problems in a direct fashion through informants, tapes, etc. We feel these sessions to be particularly important for the acquisition of some practical phonetics and for the creation of problem-solving situations which lead to genuine understanding of the complex structure of language.

Staff: One half-time member for the lecture portion and two to three graduate assistants for the laboratory sessions depending upon the size of the class.

Recommended texts: The three texts (marked in the Bibliography with an asterisk) recommended for adoption for the course were chosen partly because of their avoidance of much of the highly esoteric terminology to be found in modern linguistics. We feel that the course should be directed more toward principles than detailed analysis. Sapir's book is probably the most readable introduction to language that exists. Moulton's book focuses attention on the basic linguistic problems which the language learner faces, but cannot usually recognize for lack of initiation in linguistics. A Linguistics Reader was chosen for its

breadth as well as its level. Some of the readings represent advanced scholarship in Linguistics. These are included primarily for the exceptional students who will undoubtedly want to pursue given topics further. It is assumed that all assigned readings will be discussed in class or laboratory on a level appropriate to the abilities of the students in general.

H. Allen (ed.), Applied English Linguistics.

A. Baugh, A History of the English Language. New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1963.

L. Bloomfield, Language. New York: Holt, 1963.

Dineen, An Introduction to General Linguistics. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.

J. Downing, The Initial Teaching Alphabet. New York: Macmillan, 1964.

W. Francis, The Structure of American English. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1958.

H. Gleason, An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961.

J. Greenberg (ed.), Universals of Language. Cambridge: The M. I. T. Press, 1966.

P. Jakobson, G. Fant, and M. Halle, Preliminaries to Speech Analysis. Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1967.

Lees, Grammar of English Nominalization, IJAL, Vol. 29, No. 3, July, 1960.

E. Lenneberg (ed.), New Directions in the Study of Language. Cambridge: The M. I. T. Press, 1966.

*W. Moulton, A Linguistic Guide to Language Learning. MLA, 1966.

P. Roberts, English Syntax. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964.

S. Robertson and F. Cassidy, The Development of Modern English. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1964.

*E. Sapir, Language. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1949.

J. Waterman, Perspectives in Linguistics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.

*G. Wilson (ed.), A Linguistic Reader. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

Course Outline: As will be seen in more detail in the following outline, the first quarter, after a more general introduction to the nature of language, is concerned mainly with the sounds of language in both their physical and systematic aspects. The second quarter first turns to application of the knowledge of phonological systems to history and then introduces larger linguistic units and the processes which affect them. The final quarter is devoted to a fairly sophisticated analysis of English grammar and discussions of the major linguistic problems which confront scholars in several fields.

The readings are suggested on the basis of accessibility and in consideration of the level of the student, most have been selected from a series of paperbacks which are recommended for purchase by the students. The others already exist for the most part in multiple copies in the library.

I. Autumn Quarter

1. Naive concepts of language: thought dependent upon speech, language equivalent to logic, primitive cultures--primitive languages, speech--an approximation to writing.

Readings: Sapir, pp. 3-23.
Gleason, pp. 1-13.
Moulton, pp. 1-22.

Lab: Discussion

2. Definitions of language. Contrast on an introductory level, current approaches to its description and indicate major conceptions of the philosophers through history.

Readings: Waterman, pp. 1-17.
Applied English Linguistics, pp. 3-15.

Lab: Discussion

3. The units of language: sound, word, sentence, idea. The universality of such units, especially phonetics. International Phonetic Alphabet and articulatory phonetics.

Readings: Moulton, pp. 49-64.

Lab: Dictation in English sounds

4. The Sounds of English. Psychological units and predictable difference (Sapir).

Readings: Sapir, pp. 43-56.
Moulton, pp. 49-64.

Lab: Dictation

5. The Prague approach and Distinctive Features. The significance of linguists' intuition. Correlations with acquisition of sounds.

Readings: A Linguistics Reader, p. 167-175.
Jakobson, pp. 1-8.

Lab: Identification of acoustic and articulatory correlates.

6. Note other systems: French, Russian. Although sounds are different, the same features suffice to abstractly characterize them. Note restrictions on occurrence that seem to be universal versus those that seem to be only a feature of a given language.

   Readings:

   Lab: Contrast schemes of consonants and vowels for several languages

7. Intonation and pitch. Demonstration of their importance: Chinese, Swedish, Serbocroatian. Film: Visible Speech. Demonstration of voice synthesizer, (if possible).

   Readings:

   Lab: Bring in informant

8. Diversity in a single language: Dialects: (State Department English Dialect Film). Problems of a standard language.

   Readings: Applied English Linguistics, p. 251.
   A Linguistics Reader, pp. 86-90, 90-95.

   Lab: Continue with informant

9. Orthography. The Initial Teaching Alphabet. Short History of the development of writing. Indication of how writing tends to preserve morphemics, not phonetics, even though some languages (e.g. Finnish, Spanish) are more phonetically rendered.

   Readings: A Linguistics Reader, p. 217.
   Downing, pp. 3-15.
   Gleason, pp. 408-424.
   Baugh, pp. 250-257.

   Lab: Finish informant work

II. Winter Quarter

1. Sound change and the sources of modern English. The Great Vowel Shift viewed traditionally and with features.

Readings: Sapir, pp. 171-191.
Baugh, pp. 289-290.
Robertson, pp. 99-108.

Lab: Discussion

2. Germanic languages, Grimm's and Verner's laws. Indo-European language "family." "Wave" versus "Tree" development.

Readings: Bloomfield, pp. 297-320.
Waterman, pp. 18-60.
Applied English Linguistics, pp. 31-36.

Lab: Practice with correspondences between German and English and Latin and French

3. Other language families. Linguistic typology. Bilingualism and borrowing as disruptive influences (Substratums). Note that the difficulty in learning a language is probably related to degree of relatedness to the language one begins with.

Readings: Greenberg, Language and Evolution, Bobbs Merrill Reprint.
Sapir, pp. 192-206.

Lab: Discussion

4. Larger linguistic units: morpheme-word-sentence versus sentence-word-morpheme. Introduce some practical work in cutting for morphemes.

Readings: Sapir, pp. 24-41.
Moulton, p. 23.
A Linguistics Reader, p. 176.

Lab: Morphemics

X

5. Rule governed behavior versus correctness. Substitutions are restricted and restrictions are rules. More work with morphemes/ morphophonemic alternations in English.

   Readings: A Linguistics Reader, pp. 10-17, 57-62, 67-70.
   Lab: Morphemic problems

6. Inflection: English and French versus Latin and Russian. Compare Turkish or Hungarian.

   Readings: Sapir, pp. 57-81.
   Lab: Inflection problems

7. Derivation: Examples from the same languages. Thorough indication of English debt to Latin and French.

   Readings: A Linguistics Reader, pp. 139-150.
   Robertson, pp. 146-183.
   Lab: Derivation problems

8. Reflection of historical development of language in morphophonemic alternations. Relation of language acquisition to historical change and to sound laws.

   Readings: Sapir, pp. 171-191.
   Lab: Discussion

9. Black box idea of Grammar. Input is known, output is known, linguist's task is to construct and test theories that account for the phenomenen of linguistic competence.

   Readings: A Linguistics Reader, pp. 275-308.
   Lab: Discussion

III. Spring Quarter

1. Syntax, diagramming sentences and immediate constituents: The basic component of a Transformational Grammar.

   Readings: Dineen, pp. 355-393.
   Applied English Linguistics, p. 146.
   A Linguistics Reader, p. 192.

   Lab: Discussion

2. The Noun Phrase and Verb Phrase in English and in other languages. Categories of words versus functions. Traditional definitions.

   Readings: (Roberts, pp. 1-30)
   Lees, pp. 1-21.

   Lab: Problems

3. Agreement and government--Hierarchy of forms in grammar.

   Readings:

   Lab: Problems

4. The transformation. Surface versus deep structure and diagramming versus analysis.

   Readings: R. B. Lees, Some Neglected Aspects of Parsing (Bobbs-Merrill Reprint)

   Lab: Problems and discussion

5. Structure versus meaning: Ambiguity.

   Readings: A Linguistics Reader, p. 76.

   Lab: Discussion

6. Semantics. Whorfian Hypothesis.

   Readings: A Linguistics Reader, pp. 259-267, 228-235.
   Katz, p. 479.

Sapir, pp. 208-220 (or Sapir, Language and Environment, (Bobbs Merrill Reprint)

Lab: Discussion

7. Other modern approaches: Saussure, Bloomfield, Hjelmslev, Martinet, Logicians, Psychologists

Readings: Dineen, pp. 192-195, 239-245, 299-312, 326-328.
A Linguistics Reader, pp. 327-341.

8. Teaching languages. Comparison of modern and traditional methods.

Readings: A Linguistics Reader, pp. 3-9, 10-16, 27-37, 57-62.
Lab: Session with foreign students

9. Full Circle: Language universals. What is Language?

Readings: Greenberg, pp. 73-113.
Lab: Discussion